

Story Idea:

1000 min. - 2000 words max.

All words must fit on a 11x17 sheet of paper

Narrative:

St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals and environment, has been made into many small statues to stand in gardens around the world. In our garden, St. Francis was set out between flowers, shrubs, and bird feeders, fully connected to the outside world he protects. Unfortunately some of these St. Francis statues have been destined to the unlucky fate of crossing my path. There have been two St. Francis statues that have been sentenced to die by my hands, and one lucky one who has managed to survive all these years. I don't know why I killed multiple St. Francis statues in my youth, specifically through the method of decapitation, but I have killed them nonetheless. Here are the stories of their demise.

The first St. Francis statue I killed came all the way from Ohio. It was my great-grandmother's, a treasured piece that had moved with her between homes. This St. Francis statue had moved from Ohio, to Virginia Beach, to finally make its way to my grandparent's house in Maryland, after my great-grandmother moved out of her home in Virginia Beach. This would be the last place it ever saw. I was young, maybe four years old, playing in my grandparent's backyard with a soccer ball. My parents, grandparents, and sister were all around, and we were enjoying kicking it around since it was a nice day outside. At the time, my grandparents had Penny the dog, a sweet boxer who was loving playing outside with the soccer ball, running around chasing me and the ball as we enjoyed the day. At some point, in between me, my family, and Penny playing with the soccer ball, I kicked the ball and it went flying right into St. Francis. Of course, St. Francis had been minding his own business entirely, and was not at all involved in the soccer game previously, but I had decided to make him join in our game regardless. St. Francis was made of colored plastic, with his brown monk robe and little white dove, a peaceful symbol of nature protected. As the ball hit him, his shaved head suddenly separated from his body, having been swiftly decapitated. I was mortified, expecting to be punished for breaking my grandparent's statue, despite it being accidental. However, everyone is laughing, entertained by the absurdity of the situation, St. Francis being murdered by a four year old. I was not punished, instead reassured that it was a mistake. The lack of punishment may have been a mistake in itself, as I went on to kill another St. Francis later on. I remember nothing of this day, but the story has lived on throughout my family regardless.

A few years later, at around seven years old, I am back at my grandparent's house. My sister and I are in their hot tub in the backyard, playing with a large exercise ball, throwing it back and forth to each other and to my grandfather who was standing in front of the basement door. Another St. Francis statue stands beside the door. This one is the replacement for the one I had broken years before, who will soon face the same fate. My sister and I are enjoying the day, tossing the ball around and having a good time. At some point, my grandfather walks away, leaving the backdoor open behind him. Somehow, an idea strikes, we should try to throw the ball through the open back door. The impossibility of the idea does not follow the thought, and I attempt to throw the ball through the door. I raised the ball over my head, and tossed it towards the open door. I missed. The ball strikes the doorframe, bounces to the left, and strikes St. Francis in the head. He has been decapitated. His body remains. Standing there. I am shocked and scared. Once again, my family finds this incredibly amusing, especially since this has happened yet again at my hands.

My grandparents do not risk buying another St. Francis again, instead opting for sturdier concrete animals that don't have a weak point at the neck. My parents however, decide to get a St. Francis of their own. Grey, heavy, and concrete, this St. Francis has a chance at survival. At some point, maybe around 11 years old, I started playing "baseball" with my dad. Although our variation involves a metal bat and tennis balls. This means that these projectile weapons are hit with even more speed and force than any ball that St. Francis has ever faced before. My dad is hit by high-speed tennis balls many times. He is bruised and battered, but somehow keeps returning to pitch again. There have been many years of damage to him, but never any to St. Francis. There are many close calls over the years, tennis balls flying over St. Francis' head, whizzing by his body, and landing at his feet. He is never struck. Every time I almost hit him, the jokes start up all over again. Every time my family recalls the horrors of what has happened to his ancestors and wonders how this one has survived for so long. Maybe this statue truly is blessed. Many, many times I have been referred to as the "Frank killer," within my family. To shorten his name, my family refers to St. Francis as "Frank" instead of his full name. Unfortunately, this does not explain the joke in the slightest to anyone who overhears me being referred to as a 'killer', which may make more sense with the context of him being a garden statue and not a real person. So far, this Frank has survived and is by far the longest living Frank that has existed within my lifetime. Maybe this Frank is blessed, or maybe he is at least not cursed to be killed by my hands. Only time will tell how this Frank may pass away, or maybe he will continue to survive past my own lifetime and go on to be killed by a future kid with a penchant for accidentally murdering saints.